

Ad Hoc DPW Planning Committee
Meeting Minutes
Draft

Date: Tuesday, December 22, 2009

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Millennium, Conference Room B

Participants: Mark Kost, Rose O'Donnell, Bob Price, George Murray, Hugh Maguire, Chip Barrett, Kelly Ross, John Mangiaratti, Bill Brennan, George Rogers, Bob Carter

CTO: 7:07 p.m.

Kost lead the participants in reviewing the draft vision statement.

- **Westford prides itself in its ability to provide superior community services to its residents. In order to continue public services far into the future in an ever-changing fiscal environment, Westford recognizes the requirement to improve efficiencies and economies.**
- **Westford will provide the highest quality and responsive, municipal level of service in the most cost efficient and effective manner taking advantage of economies of scale across its infrastructure through proper utilization of assets, procurement, maintenance, application of new technologies and personnel.**

Kost described the difference between a vision and mission statement. A vision statement is the aspirational part or long-term goal. A mission statement says what is done day-to-day.

Barrett stated the department started with parks, recreation, cemeteries, and engineering but it had been broken out over time. It is believed that as different departments grew, they required more specialized and concentrated service need. Focus shifted to broaden departments by policy, such as pesticide use. Engineering was pulled more into planning especially as the number of subdivision permit applications increased.

Engineering salary paid half from highway and half from planning. Highway currently subs out engineering contracts, presenting an area of opportunity to reduce cost.

Maguire said the Water department subcontracts engineering services and oversees it. They see little in administrative responsibility savings and possibly some procurement savings.

Rogers indicated the cemetery expansion was all handled under Highway/engineering.

Clerk of the Works could be handled by in-house engineering for additional savings.

Highway services roads, streetlights, bridges, and solid waste.

Historic Com would like to see facilities management. The issue is not the involvement piece but not all have the longevity to say when to replace roofs or boilers. No one has a repository of town infrastructure and tracks replacement.

Recycling Commission sets policy. Highway does day-to-day administration of services such as paying the bills. Barrett signs the warrants for recycling and solid waste. Chelmsford has an 8-hour a week administrator for solid waste/recycling. Self-policing of recycling enforcement is written into the contracts. Bulk stickers administered throughout Town.

Murray asked if we have studied whether water should remain an Enterprise fund? Maguire stated water is an essential service and it is important to have retained earnings. Retained earnings help cover cost of emergencies and allow immediate response.

Sharing of equipment occurs and won't stop if a DPW is formed. Price suggested someone should be charged with looking for additional sharing opportunities. Find the one that no one has found yet.

Worry about poisoning the thing that is working so well.

Fleet maintenance – Ross asked, “who made the decision to have Board of Health vehicles serviced at an outside station?” Barrett indicated the number of vehicles that can be serviced at the Highway garage is limited by number of mechanics hired by Town. Even with two mechanics, no new vehicles can be serviced.

Sewage treatment - Murray asked, “Should schools have oversight of plants?” Maguire questioned why it was not part of the Water Department.

Is procurement centralized? Procurement not centralized within Town. Day to day is fragmented. Service contracts being studied by Mangiaratti.

Parks and Grounds – 2000+ acres under care and custody of a commission without any maintenance personnel or budget. Tax possession properties ignored as well.

Kost proposed a draft mission statement. Discussion ensued.

•Westford is dedicated to delivering high quality operational services in a responsive and cost efficient manner in support of the Town's residents, boards, committees and commissions through a workforce that is highly motivated and empowered in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of all its infrastructure and assets.

Department/functions purposely not included in statement to not prejudice Town Meeting. A thorough cost/ benefit analysis needs to be done before departments are merged. Price stated that the mission statement could apply to any department, whether merged or existing.

Wormell asked, “How do we compare apples to apples?” when comparing towns that have implemented consolidated departments of public works. Use per capita, or the same spending level people can associate with. Use road miles. What service level do other Towns have versus what savings they saw in the first few years after forming a DPW?

Next meeting: finalize mission statement and begin work on interim DPW policies.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.